



News from the Office of ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

NEWS RELEASE

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POLONCARZ, OFFICIALS CELEBRATE COMPLETION OF PHASE II IMPROVEMENTS AT BLACK ROCK CANAL PARK

Iconic Black Rock, Signage, Promenade and Parking Area Highlight Development

ERIE COUNTY, NY— Today, Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz was joined by Erie County Legislator Peter Savage (3rd district), Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Troy P. Schinzel, Commissioner of the Department of Environment and Planning Thomas Dearing, Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee Chairman Alan J. Bozer, elected officials, members of the Black Rock Canal Park Steering Committee, and community members at Black Rock Canal Park to celebrate the completion of Phase II improvements there. Formerly known as the Ontario Street boat launch and Cornelius Creek Park, Black Rock Canal Park is Erie County's newest park and features a number of environmentally-friendly "green" components that enhance the park's beauty and utility.

"Today we are celebrating the continuing success story here at Black Rock Canal Park, with Phase II improvements completed and a warm, welcoming look now awaiting visitors to this beautiful waterfront area," **said Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz.** "This park has been transformed from a disused old boat launch into a beautiful park that is family and pet accessible and environmentally-friendly, and I thank the many partners who worked together to make this happen."

Erie County Legislator Peter Savage said, "I am very pleased that the second phase of improvements at Black Rock Canal Park has been completed. This has been a true community driven project and it has been my pleasure to work with the County Executive and the Black Rock Canal Park Steering Committee to make this project a reality, and look forward to future phases at this jewel on Buffalo's waterfront."

Phase II improvements at the park include a new parking area with landscaping and clearly marked areas for boat parking and handicapped parking; a new railing along the water's edge that allows an open view of the Niagara River and replaces a rusted steel wall that had previously blocked the view; a new concrete promenade along the water, formed to resemble wood planking and accompanied by grassy areas with trees; a new, lighted flagpole at the park's K-9 monument; and a new Parks Department maintenance building. Other visually compelling elements added in Phase II include a large "Black Rock" that represents the famous black rock that protruded into the Niagara River near the Peace Bridge before being removed to build the Erie Canal, and an iconic boat sculpture that symbolizes the old canal barges that travelled the Black Rock Canal.

Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee Chairman Alan J. Bozer said, " The Phase II improvements to the Black Rock Canal Park are a welcome addition to the Greenway system of trails and parks along the Niagara River stretching from South Park in South Buffalo, to the Erie County border, and then on to Lake Ontario. These improvements to the Park and other Greenway projects are

part of the legacy we bequeath to future generations, and in this case, will hopefully inspire us and future generations to improve that legacy.”

“The evolution of Black Rock Canal Park has been carefully guided by a public-private partnership that brought stakeholders together and that ultimately produced the multi-use space that we see today,” **said Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Troy P. Schinzel**. “Through planning, cooperation, shared vision, and a lot of hard work with our partners we were able to make the Park a reality today.”

Margaret Szczepaniec, President of the Black Rock Canal Park Steering Committee, added, “Black Rock Canal Park demonstrates the dedication of community volunteers working in partnership with Erie County to create a multi-use waterfront park. We are thrilled that such a valuable asset is available to the community.”

The Master Plan for Black Rock Canal Park was completed in 2010, and the completion of Phase I improvements at the site was celebrated with a ribbon cutting at the site in May 2013. Phase I brought transformational changes to the old boat launch as it was reborn into a family-friendly county park, including the installation of a roadway turnaround composed of permeable stone pavers and granite curbing; the creation of Erie County’s first dog park, which is now home to the K-9 monument; increased lawn areas and bioswales that replace formerly paved areas; porous pavement and a decorative stone filter strip that help in controlling runoff; the installation of LED light fixtures; and other “green” features.

Funding for the feasibility study, master plan, and Phase I of construction amounted to nearly \$1.4 million and was provided by the NYS Department of State – Environmental Protection Fund, NYS Department of Transportation, NYS Canal Corporation, the New York Power Authority through the Erie County Greenway Standing Committee, Erie County, and the City of Buffalo. Funding for Phase II of the project totaled \$1.065 million.

For more information:

On the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry visit <http://www2.erie.gov/parks/>

The Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee makes grants of \$2 million annually through an agreement of the New York Power Authority with the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, the City of Buffalo and the County of Erie. Grants by the Standing Committee benefit projects that are consistent with the Niagara Greenway Plan. For more information about the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee, please visit:

<http://niagara.nypa.gov/RelicensingGreenwayFunds/BufferoErieGreenway/BEdefault.htm>

or contact Alan J. Bozer, Committee Chairman, at (716) 504-5700 or Abozer@phillipslytle.com.

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